



OBSERVATIONS  
ON THE  
CANADA COMPANY

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Frederick Widder

1845





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OBSERVATIONS  
OF THE  
COURSE AND PRESENT PROGRESS  
OF  
THE CANADA COMPANY  
CONTAINED  
IN FOUR LETTERS  
TO  
FREDERICK WIDDER, ESQ.,

OF THE PARLIAMENT.

London: Printed by G. G. & J. W. Smith, 1845.

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OBSERVATIONS

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ON THE

HISTORY AND RECENT PROCEEDINGS

OF

THE CANADA COMPANY;

ADDRESSED

IN FOUR LETTERS

TO

FREDERICK WIDDER, ESQ.,

ONE OF THE COMMISSIONERS.

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Alas, for the Press of Canada! it neglects its highest duty—  
protection to the friendless stranger; or such things would not be.  
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ORSEVATIONS

ON THE STATE OF THE

THE CANADA COMPANY

BY FOUR LETTERS

TO THE HONORABLE

THE HONORABLE THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Early MS

OBSERVATIONS, &c.

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LETTER 1.

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HAMILTON, GORE, Feb. 1845.

SIR,—When a person enjoying from his accidental position some degree of influence in the community is pleased to come forward to propose and advocate a particular measure, without first consulting those who are more immediately interested, and not without the appearance of ostentation, he may be fairly supposed to court rather than to shun the fullest investigation into his proceedings. It will not, therefore, surprise you to find your letters of the 18th and 19th November, addressed to the Rev. Dr. Cook and the Church Society of the Diocese of Toronto, made the subject of a few simple, but it is hoped, just and candid remarks.

Had not great pains been taken to promote the wide circulation of these letters, and elicit favourable opinions as to their object from various Journals, I do not think that I should have felt disposed to examine them minutely. And indeed so long as their dissemination was confined to this province, there appeared to me little necessity for criticising them; but when

they are found inserted in the *Albion*, and mightily lauded by that good-natured Editor, I was provoked to inquire whether the proposal they contain be so very disinterested on the part of the Canada Company as your pet newspapers have asserted; and whether the two national Churches of England and Scotland would be justified, had they the power, in consigning their property into the hands of a few merchants in London, totally ignorant of this country, and who must therefore of necessity hand over the trust to their Agents in this Province, to be dealt with at their discretion; and if under any circumstances it was found advisable to intrust the only public provision for their future maintenance which these Churches can ever expect, on what reasonable conditions and restrictions such an important step should be taken.

It is well known that soon after the passing of the Act in 1840, for the sale of the Clergy Reserves and the distribution of the proceeds thereof, steps were taken by the members of the Church of England to procure the possession of the small portion of their property which the law had left them. Accordingly, on the establishment of the Church Society, a petition was drawn up to the Queen, and communications opened with the Kirk of Scotland,



requesting that respectable body to co-operate in the necessary proceedings, so that each might have the sole control and management of its own portion of the Reserves. Various delays prevented immediate action; and the prospect that the Church Society would soon acquire a Charter of Incorporation, rendered it expedient to postpone further proceedings till such Charter should be obtained.

No sooner, however, had the Church Society become a corporate body than a public meeting was called, on the 21st September, 1843, at which it was resolved to petition the Government that the management of the share of the Reserves allotted to the Church of England might be given in trust to the said Society.

Now I have reason to believe that the discussions held, and the steps prepared to be taken by the Church Society on that occasion, were not unknown to you,—nay, that you were present at the meeting. Hence I have a right to infer that what you heard on that day suggested your scheme for frustrating the object of the Society and securing it to the Canada Company. You say in your letter—"It has been respectfully submitted to me by influential parties of every shade of political feeling,—and I believe the subject has been urged on the attention of the Governor General,—that

it would be highly expedient, as well as most advantageous to the Province, that the administration of the public lands should be vested in the Canada Company." With the ridiculous flourish at the commencement of this passage, respecting "influential parties of every shade of political feeling," we have nothing to do; but what follows clearly implies that the Governor General's attention was called to the subject by you yourself; that the proceedings of the Church Society suggested to you the idea; and that you caused offers to be made to the Government in England, as well as here, on the part of the Canada Company, to manage the Clergy Reserves assigned to the two Churches more cheaply than they could do it themselves.

If I am wrong in these inferences or conjectures, it will be easy to refute me by giving the dates of your letters to the Directors of the Company, urging upon them the advantage of applying to Government for the management of the public lands; and the time when you mentioned the matter to the Governor General; and when His Excellency had despatches from England calling his attention to the proposals made by the Canada Company in London on the same subject.

Now you must permit me to put in words



what I believe every member of the Church Society who has given this matter consideration thinks, viz.—that your thus intermeddling in our affairs is not only offensive and injurious, but by no means creditable either to you or the Company you represent. It is true, the blame rests chiefly with you, because such a scheme, till suggested by you, never could have entered the heads of the Directors. Had you written to the Church Society, stating your willingness to take the management of the Church lands, under its direction, so soon as that Institution had obtained them from Government, at a moderate per centage, it would have been quite fair and honourable; but to rush in between the Society and Government, and intermeddle to obstruct their schemes, and to make use of the information which you obtained at their meeting to prevent as far as you could the object they were soliciting, places you in a situation not very enviable, and reflects no credit on the Company of which you are the only organ at present in the Province. In the common transactions of life, a man who goes in an underhand manner to undermine his neighbour, loses caste and is universally condemned. And is it not more odious to make use of your position and accidental influence to frustrate the reasonable expectations of the Church



Society? I am told that you have had the assurance to boast that Government would never give the Church the management of her own property, and if so your proceedings have not only been most offensive but highly injurious; for until you began your manœuvres there was every ground for believing that our petition would be readily granted. It is, however, so much easier to break down than to build up, that I shall not be surprised at your being able to destroy our hopes without benefiting yourself or your Company. At all events, you may rest assured that open and plain dealing is the best course to pursue; or if not yet convinced of this truth, because success has attended some of your artful manœuvres, it will not be long before such conviction arrives.

It would seem that the Canada Company delighted in placing itself, when opportunity offered, in opposition to the Church. Its commencement began with an attempt to purchase half the Clergy Reserves, and it cost the friends of the Church no little trouble to prevent the great sacrifice of Church property which the contemplated sale would have caused. Now again, through your uncalled for intermeddlings, the Church and Canada Company are brought into collision. Not that you have any chance of success; for considering the

unnatural influence which the Company already possesses, having more than one-seventh of the whole Province under its control, no government would be so completely insane as to add to such influence. But although you cannot succeed, you can throw serious obstacles in the way of our success; and thus you do us great injury.

No sooner did your letters appear, than all the journals honoured with your advertisements came out in favour of your plan, and could scarcely find words strong enough to express their admiration of your wonderful sagacity and profound wisdom in suggesting so frugal a plan,—a plan which, they aver, proved the vast comprehension of your mind, and the soundness of your judgment, and what not.

I readily admit that any sort of management would be better than the present, because it is not management but waste. But the friends of the Church are not deceived by your offer as to cheapness. Your first feeler (for you do much by 'feelers') sent abroad was, that the Company expected fifteen per cent, or something more than one-seventh of the produce of the sales; and it was contended that even at this cost the arrangement would be very beneficial to the Church, for at present all is expended. This we admit; but we cannot on that



score agree to fifteen per cent. It was soon found that such an amount of percentage would not be granted; for it was shrewdly remarked, that if the Canada Company were to get fifteen per cent. for managing the Clergy Reserves, they might double the salaries of all their servants, and still manage their own lands for nothing. Another feeler of ten per cent. was then thrown out, and with little better success; for it still grated upon the ears of practical men as far too much.— This being perceived, it was contradicted by your authority, and the rate of commission is reserved as a mystery. But to the friends of the Church it is no mystery; for they can get the business done at two or perhaps two and a half per cent. by persons of equal integrity and of much greater experience in such matters than the Canada Company have in their employment. Hence your proposed arrangement in regard to expense is a delusion, although strongly recommended by certain journals; and they would have recommended it, had you proposed ninety per cent. instead of fifteen.

It is said that attempts have been made to influence some Members of Parliament in your favour, who have a sort of hydrophobia towards Clergymen and Religion. Such may be the case; and they may



believe you and your advertising newspapers, which declare that the Canada Company, of whom we know nothing, except through their Commissioners, is far more worthy of trust than the Church Society, comprising all the Clergy and the most respectable of our Laity, as regards the Church of England, and all the Ministers and Lay Elders of the Kirk of Scotland, which embrace the principal persons of that respectable communion; but this will not be the belief of the inhabitants of the Province. Nor need we fear the influence of those who, from their hatred of religion, oppose every measure which tends to its support, or the grovelling Editors whose consciences vibrate with your advertisements; because they contend that the two Commissioners, (respectable gentlemen as they are allowed to be,) comparative strangers to the country, and without any particular interest or connexion in it, are more worthy to be trusted with the property of the two National Churches, than the Churches themselves; for there are some things so utterly absurd as to carry with them their own refutation, and this is one: nor do the supporters of such a preposterous arrangement believe in its justice or wisdom themselves, but some are actuated by a blind hatred to religion and others by selfishness.

The National Churches desire the management of their respective portions of the Reserves, because they consider strangers incapable of disposing of the trust in the most beneficial manner for the purposes for which the property was first given by the pious King George the Third of blessed memory. These Churches consider themselves more competent than any two indifferent persons to decide upon proper sites for Churches and burial-grounds and small endowments, that parishes may be made permanent, and the ministrations of religion secured to the inhabitants thereof through future generations. The bugbear that such insignificant appropriations, all of which under actual improvement, would impede settlements, like other absurdities which have no weight but during times of agitation, has passed away. It was indeed never believed; but it answered its purpose, when the passions of unreasoning men were roused against the Clergy Reserves; but it is too ridiculous to admit of repetition, more especially on the very small scale for which the Churches contend.

It would no doubt be very gratifying to you, and perhaps to the Canada Company, to receive the Bishop of the Diocese and the Moderator of the Synod in the character of suppliants, making humble appli-



cation to you for your influence in procuring a site for a Church or burial-ground, or glebe, out of their own land, and requesting you to recommend it for favourable consideration.

But were there no objection to the plan you propose on the score of expense, or because it deprives the Churches of the power which they ought to possess over the disposition of their own property for the best advantage of religion, I should protest against it on account of your present vicious management, so different from what it has formerly been,—a management which only requires to be brought clearly before the public to excite universal indignation.

The experience of many centuries shews that the Church has ever been a lenient landlord, and that she seeks not to extract the last farthing as you are doing; nor could she countenance your present grinding mode of disposing of her lands, adopted in an evil hour by the Canada Company at your suggestion.

But in order to understand this matter fully, it appears necessary to go back a little to the origin and history of the Canada Company; for though to you and to many this may appear superfluous, yet such information, brief as it must be, will be found in some measure new to the



great majority of the inhabitants of the Province.

I am, &c.,

ALIQUIS.

FREDERICK WIDDER, Esq.

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## LETTER II.

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HAMILTON, GORE, Feb., 1845.

SIR,—The Canada Company owes its existence to the late John Galt, Esq., a gentleman well known for his literary acquirements and the pleasure which his many valuable and entertaining publications have conferred upon all who speak the English language. He was a man of deep thought and much discernment, and acted for himself with a boldness, independence and energy, which are not often found associated with eminence in literature. Were this the proper place, it would be an easy as well as a pleasing task, to shew that Mr. Galt was not only a shrewd observer of men and manners, but that he could speak strongly to the feelings as well as the understanding.

In early life he had been accustomed to mercantile business, and having travelled much, had improved his natural sagacity by experience, and had acquired a more varied and extensive knowledge of the

world than commonly falls to the share of literary men.—These advantages enabled him in his popular Novels to adorn and soften his stories with many exquisite touches of unexpected tenderness and simple pathos, and to enliven them with much sly humour and great truth of nature. And if he sometimes carried his description a little too far, the fault was more than redeemed by the natural good sense, taste, and kind feelings exhibited in his principal characters.

Such was Mr. Galt, a gentleman of unquestionable ability and experience, who had been long before the British public as an entertaining and favourite writer, when he conceived the design of forming a Company in London, for purchasing, improving, settling, and disposing of lands and other property in Upper Canada. Being well known in the City from his former commercial pursuits, and deemed a man of good judgment and practical talents, he found little difficulty in associating with himself a sufficient number of respectable merchants and others in this enterprise. Having formed themselves into a Company and subscribed a million sterling, they opened negotiations in 1824 with the late Lord Bathurst, His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, to purchase all the lands in Upper Canada



known by the names of Crown and Clergy Reserves. The scheme having been favourably entertained by Government, an Act passed on the 27th June, 1825, entitled "An Act to enable His Majesty to grant to a Company to be incorporated by Royal Charter, certain Lands in the Province of Upper Canada, and to invest the said Company with certain powers and privileges, and for other purposes relating thereto." In August, 1826, the Charter incorporating the Company was issued by the Crown.

In the mean time, Commissioners had been sent out to Canada West to value the lands, and objections having been made to the sale of the Clergy Reserves on account of the lowness of the valuation, they were withdrawn, and the Huron District of eleven hundred thousand acres was granted in lieu thereof.

Without entering into details it may suffice to remark that the whole purchase made by the Company from the Government was about two and a half millions of acres, at the low price of three shillings and sixpence, currency, per acre, except about two hundred and seventy thousand acres, bestowed by Government as a gift for giving up the Clergy Reserves. The lands, therefore, actually paid for consisted only of 2,213,843 acres, nor was the valua-

tion paid at once; on the contrary, it was spread over a period of sixteen years, and bore no interest. So that in truth the three shillings and sixpence per acre, thus payable in sixteen annual instalments without interest, was scarcely worth, in ready money, one shilling and tenpence currency; and this may be considered the sum actually paid for their lands per acre by the Canada Company,—a very advantageous bargain certainly, and such as would enable the Company, if so inclined, to dispose of their lands to Settlers on the most reasonable terms. Moreover, the instalments paid by the Company to Government annually during the sixteen years, did not amount to the Interest at six per cent. on the valuation of three shillings and sixpence per acre. So that the Company have in fact paid no capital, but something less than the interest on the value of lands ascertained sixteen years ago.

To render all this plainer,—suppose a settler to purchase a farm of two hundred acres, at three shillings and sixpence per acre, and to be allowed his Deed at the expiration of sixteen years, on condition of paying annually the interest on the purchase money. Now 200 acres at 3s. 6d. amount to £35, the interest of which at six per cent. £2 2s., and for the sixteen years £33 12s., or actually less than the



land was valued at sixteen years before, viz. £35. Such were the easy terms upon which the Canada Company acquired their great property in this Province.

All necessary arrangements with the Home Government having been at length completed, Mr. Galt was sent out to Canada as the first Commissioner, early in 1827, to commence operations. From Mr. Galt's arrival to the present time, the history of the Company divides itself into three different periods.—1st. The management of John Galt, Esquire. 2nd. The management of the Hon. William Allan and Thomas Mercer Jones, Esquire. 3rd. The management of Thomas Mercer Jones and Frederick Widder, Esquires.

1. The management of John Galt, Esq.

On Mr. Galt's arrival in 1827 to take charge of the affairs of the Company, he had many difficulties to remove and many intricate arrangements to make before he could proceed to dispose of any considerable portion of the lands. He had also to frame and adopt a system of improvement to induce settlers to take up lands so far from the cultivated parts of the Province, and to take measures to turn the stream of emigration from the United States to Upper Canada.

In all these he made some progress; but the shortness of his period of service pre-

vented him from bringing any of them to maturity. What he did indicated a boldness of enterprise and comprehensiveness of conception, which left little more to those who succeeded, than to fill up the outline. He opened a magnificent road from the old settlements to the township of Guelph. Here he laid out a town of the same name, and built offices for the transaction of the Company's business. He procured the survey of the Huron Tract, and caused a sleigh-road to be made from Guelph to Goderich, at the mouth of the river Maitland, on Lake Huron. In all his labours he was cheered and assisted by Dr. Dunlop, the Warden of the Forests, whose literary talents and original character made him an associate worthy of the Commissioner. They were, it is believed, old friends, and came from the same neighbourhood in Scotland. But be this as it may, the good-natured witty Doctor still lives, and is too well and favourably known for me to presume to hazard an encomium on his merits. I am nevertheless pleased to find that he is at length assuming that high place in the Legislature which his abilities will always enable him to maintain, should he discharge somewhat of his indolence, and be a little more economical of the *horn*.

Notwithstanding his incessant, and, I may say, useful and brilliant exertions, Mr.



Galt's management was on the whole unfortunate, and this chiefly from circumstances over which he had little or no control. At first, as might have been expected, all was outlay and nothing was coming in. After this had continued for some time, the Directors, entirely ignorant of the proper way of preparing wild lands for settlement, became alarmed, and began to think that Mr. Galt was visionary and extravagant, and would ruin them in expenses. Unluckily for the Commissioner, he got into a disagreeable correspondence with the Colonial Government, which had an unfavourable effect on his interests at St. Helen's Place, and so tired were the Company of their bargain that they thought of throwing it up even at a serious loss.— Under these gloomy circumstances the Commissioner was hastily recalled, and the reception he met with from the Directors was by no means gracious. Fortunately for the Company they determined to persevere, and so far have proceeded, with wonderful success. It is, however, painful to record, that Mr. Galt, who planned the whole, and lived long enough to see his scheme in prosperous operation, should not have been made in some degree a partaker of the benefits he had created, and that his valuable services, of which the Company were and are enjoying the rich

fruits, should have been altogether forgotten. He was also at this time an invalid and in distress. Surely the Directors and Stockholders, when they clearly saw the certainty of the immense gains which must be the result of their association, ought to have made a handsome provision for its original projector, to whom they owe everything, while he was yet alive, and for his family after his departure. Had five hundred or a thousand pounds a-year been given to Mr. Galt while he lived or continued to his widow to enable her to bring up her children, it would have done honour to the Canada Company, and yet have been nothing in comparison to the hundreds of thousands which Mr. Galt's labours are yielding; but as Hume somewhere says, bodies of men and Corporations have no hearts.

2. On the return of Mr. Galt to England, Thomas Mercer Jones, Esq., was sent out, (for we speak not of a Mr. Smith, who came out and returned) and assumed the more active duties of management.— With him the Company associated the Hon. William Allan, a gentleman well known in the Province, and whose name carried with it confidence and the guarantee of just and honourable dealing.

The Commissioners managed the affairs of the Company for more than ten years



with the most gratifying success. They are both men of sound judgment, and what was at first wanting in experience on the part of the younger Commissioner was amply supplied by Mr. Allan's intimate acquaintance with the whole Province from its most early settlement. The new Commissioners were also practical men, and wholly devoted to their duties. They began immediately to diffuse throughout the United Kingdom and the Continent of Europe correct information respecting the Province and its vast capabilities, and more especially the certain and solid advantages which it offered to the industrious and labouring poor. To emigrants they gave every possible encouragement. They stationed Agents at the Ports of Quebec and New York, to give information to emigrants on their landing, and to protect them as far as possible against being deceived, or diverted from their original destination through the interested representations of individuals; and to such as wished to become their settlers free passages were given from the ports to the head of Lake Ontario, and sometimes to their settlements.

In regard to settlements, their chief energies were directed to the Huron Tract, because little or nothing could be done in the way of improvement to the detached

Crown Reserves. Good roads were constructed from one end of the tract to the other; means of conveyance provided; and mills erected for the convenience of the growing population. A harbour was constructed at the mouth of the river Maitland, on lake Huron, where the town of Goderich is laid out; a steam-boat was built to run between Buffalo and Goderich, and since its loss, arrangements have been made for a steam-boat to call weekly at Goderich, for the accommodation of emigrants and the purposes of commerce.—

These and many other improvements and facilities were skilfully and judiciously planned and arranged, and although attended with considerable expense, it has been abundantly repaid by the rapidity of settlement which it has occasioned. The Huron Tract may be pronounced the most successful specimen of rapid settlement which North America has yet produced, and all owing to the wise exertions of the Commissioners, who neither spared labour nor expense in its accomplishment.

In this country wild lands may be considered raw material, and unless something is done to prepare them for cultivation, they remain on hand unsaleable and useless. Had the Canada Company done nothing for the Huron Tract it would still be a wilderness: had their improvements



been partial, their settlements would have continued trifling and their lands low in price. The harbour, for instance, made at Goderich, which may have cost the Company a few thousand pounds, has raised the value of their lands by at least half a dollar per acre twenty miles round. Even under the most favourable circumstances, a township given out by Government as it was wont to be done, and on which no other improvement was made but what the poor settlers did themselves, would not be in the same state of prosperity or value in twenty years that one of the Company's townships would be in seven. The money, therefore, judiciously laid out in improving a tract of wild land is always returned fourfold. The Huron Tract has had forty or fifty thousand pounds laid out on it, and all the land which has become readily accessible has risen from a nominal value of two shillings and six-pence to ten and fifteen shillings per acre; and were the improvements extended into the still wild parts of the tract, they would repay the Company in the same proportion by increasing the value of the land. Thus in the State of New York much worse lands, because easily accessible by tolerable roads, are selling at four and five pounds per acre.

During their management, the Commis-

sioners published at different times statistical tables, of great value and importance, proving the wonderful progress of various settlements throughout the tract; and in order that these statements might make a more lasting impression and be distinctly understood, they gave lists of individuals by name, whose advancement in all that concerns comfort and even in wealth shewed what honest industry, when encouraged by fair and honourable treatment, can accomplish. The Commissioners in many other respects attended to the wants and feelings of their settlers. They facilitated their correspondence with their friends and relatives at home: they transmitted their little savings to bring out their kins-people or acquaintances, and became to them friends and protectors. The rising and prosperous towns of Guelph and Goderich; the general aspect of the Huron District; the goodness of the lands, the fine appearance of the farms; the ease and comfort of the more early settlers affords the most satisfactory evidence of the judicious and prudent management adopted by the Commissioners during this period. On the whole their management may be characterized as distinguished for extensive and skilful improvements, rapidity of settlement, and a remarkable increase of real wealth to the Company in the value of



their land and an attachment of the settlers from the invariable attention and kindness they had received from the Commissioners.

I have the honour to be, Sir,  
&c. &c. &c.

ALIQUIS.

FREDERICK WIDDER, Esq.

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### LETTER III.

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HAMILTON, GORE, Feb. 1845.

SIR,—It is not easy to divine why the Directors of the Canada Company, amidst a course of such growing prosperity, should have in any manner disturbed the management. The system of settling the Huron Tract was complete in all its arrangements, and in full operation; and the Commissioners had much less to do than formerly, having overcome almost every obstacle in their way; and yet a third is added to their number. Such a proceeding on the part of the Directors it is difficult to explain, except indeed by supposing that they had a dependent to be provided for, and if there was no regular opening one must be made.

On your arrival in 1839 you found every thing in the most excellent condition, and little employment for a third Commissioner. However, a division of labour became

necessary; and the office at Toronto, which was consigned to you and Mr. Allan, embraced the more simple and easy portion of the Company's business. The more arduous task of still extending the settlements in the Huron Tract was it appears, received by Mr. Jones as his share of the labour; not only, I presume, because he wished to complete what had been so long under his care, but because it was a labour that no stranger could satisfactorily conduct.

The affairs of the Company being in the best possible order, no alteration in the management seemed desirable or expedient. For some time, therefore, matters went on as usual, if we except on your part that coquetting with the newspapers, which began soon after your entrance into office, and which has gone on increasing to the present day.

To a person of your disposition, so anxious for notoriety and so prone to scheming and manœuvring, this healthy state of things was by no means agreeable, —no faults to find, no amendments possible, might have provoked even a stronger mind than your's. Something, however, must be done; some stroke of policy to render you conspicuous and ingratiate you with the Directors. But how? Mr. Allan was an enemy to unnecessary change; he had



little confidence in the judgment of a man who had no experience in the country, and who might be a very good clerk in the counting-house, and yet by no means qualified to conduct the complicated affairs of the Company, or improve a management which had demonstrated its excellence by many years' experience. The first step, therefore, was to get rid of Mr. Allan: he was a great incumbrance upon you. So long as he shared with you the duties of the office, he had full access to all that was going forward, and would suffer no alteration except for the better: he was also too well acquainted with the country and what ought to be done by the Company for their own interests and honour, and too practical to admit of hazardous experiments. Moreover, he was of stern and unbending integrity, and ready to refute any representations made to the Directors unless they were fair and honourable. Nothing could be done after your own heart while such a colleague remained; he must, therefore, be removed. How this was brought about I know not; but certain it is that Mr. Allan soon saw quite enough of your wishes, if not of your proceedings, to convince him that you could not proceed harmoniously together, and at his advanced period of life it was not worth his while to live in contention. He there-

fore thought it better to retire, and in a short time sent in his resignation, which was graciously accepted.

This was a great movement in your behalf, and it was also a saving, and you had the sagacity to know that the certain road to the favour of the Directors was to diminish the annual expense of existing establishments and outlays on improvements. On both these points you have laboured without intermission, till you have made the Directors as great enemies to advantageous improvements as you are yourself. Now so far as stopping works necessary for promoting settlements, such as opening roads, building mills, &c. &c., I have nothing to say, because the loss will fall heavily on the Company, and they can bear it. At the same time I may be allowed to remark that the judicious improvement of your wild lands so as to prepare them for comfortable settlement is infinitely for the benefit of the Proprietors, who will realize fourfold the cost of the improvement in the increased value of the land; and it is their duty, and the only way by which they have as yet indirectly benefitted the Province. Nor will the Directors always continue so obtuse on this point as they seem to be at present. But I leave this matter as a standing proof of your incapacity for the office you fill, and



your blindness to the real interests as well as the reputation of your employers.

These, however, I consider trivial points when compared to the system of extortion and rapacity in the sale of the lands which you have for the last three years been substituting for the plain and simple mode which you found in operation on coming to the country, and which is not yet entirely abandoned.

This new plan of disposing of the Company's lands, which you call the Leasing System, is the great stroke of policy by which your management will be distinguished: it is, I believe, allowed to be wholly your's, and therefore in justice to you it ought to be fairly examined.

Before your arrival the sales of land by the Canada Company were made for ready money, or one-fifth of the purchase money at the time of making the bargain, and the balance in five equal annual instalments with interest. Notes of hand were given for each instalment, bearing interest till paid.

In a new country, where the price of the land has in general to be made out of the soil, this period is too short, but the Commissioners were lenient, and as no Deed was given till the purchase money with accruing interest was entirely paid up, they ran no risk in giving time, having

the title still in themselves with the growing improvements.

It would appear that you very soon became dissatisfied with this mode of disposing of the lands of the Company: it was conducted with too much liberality and indulgence to suit your taste, and like a covetous trader you determined to sell every indulgence or extension of credit at the highest rate; and yet by the complication of the arrangement, to make this very extortion appear a boon to the simple and confiding purchaser.

The first step towards this new system within my knowledge is contained in your advertisement bearing date 16th July, 1842. In this you state that "the prices of the Company's lands vary from 8s. to 15s. per acre; some, from particular local advantages, are charged from 16s. 3d. to 20s.; but the average may be taken at 12s. 6d. per acre, payable one-fifth in cash; the balance in five annual instalments, with interest at 6 per cent. The Canada Company are anxious to assist such respectable settlers as may be desirous of proceeding with their families to the Huron District, but who may not have the means of paying the usual cash and subsequent heavy instalments. The Company will, in consequence, grant Leases for twelve years for their lands upon the lowest rate of rent



possible, (to relieve the settler from any immediate cash demands upon him which he may not like to pay) at the expiration of which lease and the punctual payment of the very small rent commencing one year from the date of the lease, the settler will receive a Deed of the lands he occupies without further charge. Under these Leases no money is required down.

"The rents payable annually upon one hundred acres are these:—

|                                            |  |    |    |
|--------------------------------------------|--|----|----|
| "At the end of the first year from signing |  |    |    |
| lease . . . . .                            |  | £2 | 0s |
| — second . .                               |  | 3  | 0  |
| — third . . .                              |  | 4  | 0  |
| — fourth . .                               |  | 6  | 0  |
| — fifth . . .                              |  | 8  | 0  |
| — sixth . . .                              |  | 9  | 5  |
| — seventh . .                              |  | 10 | 5  |
| — eighth . .                               |  | 11 | 5  |
| — ninth . . .                              |  | 12 | 0  |
| — tenth . . .                              |  | 13 | 10 |
| — eleventh .                               |  | 14 | 10 |
| — twelfth . .                              |  | 16 | 10 |

For one hundred acres . £110 5  
or about 22s. per acre, upon a credit of  
twelve years, free of all interest."

On this prospectus it is to be remarked  
that the leases are to be made without res-  
pect to the variety of prices of your lands.  
On reference to the terms of the lease they

are exceedingly stringent. Among others there is one which forfeits all the improvements, houses, barns, fences, &c., without the slightest allowance, should the rent from any cause be in arrear twenty days, whether demanded or not; and the same cruel forfeiture is made "in case of breach or non-performance of any or either of the covenants."

In the above quotation it is said that the credit is for twelve years, free of all interest, and no money is required down.—Now if these things are apparently correct in words, are they true in fact?

Suppose three settlers call upon you to purchase one hundred acres of land each, at ten shillings per acre. One has some money, and pays for his land on the instant, and gets his deed for £50. The second pays an instalment of one-fifth down and the balance in five equal annual instalments, and his land costs him at the end of his five years when all paid up with interest, £57 4s. Now I consider both these settlers to have made an equally fair bargain, because the advantage of five years' credit is equal to the interest accruing on the instalments, viz. £7 4s. I further consider the Company as much benefitted by the one settler as the other; perhaps rather more by the second, who pays six per cent. upon his balances,—a



higher rate of interest than the Company can get, had the money been paid into their hands.

The third settler, allured by the words "no money required down, and free of interest," takes a lease of his land for twelve years, and during that period he has to pay £110 5s. for what he might have had for £50 ready money, or at five years' credit £57 4s.; consequently the poor lessee, for the additional credit of seven years, has to pay £53 1s.; and yet he is told that he pays no interest. Now this is the more rapacious, inasmuch as the Company rather gains than loses by extending credit for a few years to the settler, provided he pays six per cent. on the sum due.

This scheme was soon discovered to be too grinding; and therefore, within eight months a prospectus bearing date the 17th February, 1843, made its appearance, reducing the lease to the term of ten years, and entirely changing the money conditions. In the first prospectus we are told that the Company's lands vary from 8s. to 15s.; in this second, from 2s. to 13s. 9d. per acre. A lot of land of 100 acres, at 10s. per acre, is now offered for lease at the upset price of £50 for ten years, at a rent of £3 per annum, which is in fact the interest at six per cent. If the lessee

choose, he may have his deed at any time within the first five years, on paying the upset price and  $12\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. in addition, or what is the same, 1s. 3d. additional per acre,—the annual rent of £3 having been also fully discharged.

After the expiration of five years he must pay  $12\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. more, or another 1s. 3d. additional per acre, on the upset price, £50, to get his deed. By this process the lessee pays for his lands including rents (£30) and addition (£12 10s.) £92 10s. These terms are somewhat more favourable, though still very covetous on the part of the Company, who exact from the purchaser for five years credit above what he would have had to pay on the system of five years instalment, £35 6s.; yet we are told the lessee pays no interest. There is, we must allow, a good deal of art in adding to the original price 1s. 3d. per acre, or  $12\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., at the expiration of five years, and 1s. 3d. more, or in all 2s. 6d., that is 25 per cent. at the end of ten years; so that in fact the lessee, besides a sum equal to the regular interest on the upset price 50*l.*, pays 12s. 6d. per acre for his land; or in other words, he pays  $8\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on his purchase during the whole term of the lease, but as the law allows only 6 per cent., the terms are so modified as to produce this result without exposing



the Company to the penalty of taking illegal interest. In this consists your ingenuity; but whether creditable or not I leave the public to determine. The most extraordinary feature of this prospectus is, offering lands for sale at 2, 3, 4, &c. shillings per acre. Now there is every reason to believe that copies of this advertisement or prospectus have been circulated through the United Kingdom, but where such cheap lands, if capable of cultivation, are to be found, nobody can tell. This is a very serious matter, and has no doubt produced grievous disappointment. A farmer or labourer, for instance, in England, Scotland, or Ireland, seeing lands advertised for sale so low by so respectable a Company, would take it for granted that they were capable of settlement; and although from the gradation of prices from two shillings to thirteen and ninepence he might infer that the land at two or three shillings was of inferior quality, yet the character of the Company would seem to him a sufficient pledge that the soil was such as to enable him to acquire from it by his labour a comfortable living. So judging, many persons who had no intention to leave home till they saw the cheapness of the land, may be induced to come out. Now I will venture to say that if you had any land rated so low as two or three shillings per acre it is worthless.

and that all those who come from Europe in the hope of acquiring a farm at prices so low, must be disappointed, and have reason to complain that they have been grossly and wilfully deceived. This suppositious cheapness of land and the attractive words "no money paid down," allure emigrants to come into the Province, and when they come out they find no cheap land at two and three shillings; and although they literally pay no money down, they are made to pay more than double the prime cost of their land for a credit of ten years, which so far from costing the Company anything, is rather a benefit. Had you been anxious to give the friendless emigrant the benefit of a credit of ten years, why did you not adopt the system of the Commissioner of Crown Lands, one-fifth of the 50*l.* paid down, and the balance in nine equal annual instalments with interest? In this case the lot would at the expiration of the period have cost about 63*l.* 10*s.*; and instead of paying you 35*l.* 6*s.* for five years credit, he would have had only to pay 6*l.* 6*s.*, and yet the transaction would have been sufficiently profitable to the Company,

The second advertisement or prospectus, and the lease founded thereon, lasted somewhat longer than the first; but you soon discovered it to be cumbersome, and after



a trial of about fourteen months, that is from 17th February, 1843, to 6th May, 1844, you modified its conditions without diminishing your profits, and issued a third prospectus. In your circular accompanying this document and form of lease, you remark to your correspondents, "you will note that our present leases to be used hereafter are considerably amended, are simpler, and not so stringent as the old forms unnecessarily were.

"The increased amount of about 25 per cent. for credit for ten years is at once specified on lease; the former two pre-emptions of purchase,  $12\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. each for five and ten years, are abandoned. (This is incorrect; they are not abandoned but consolidated.) The rent will remain upon the previous scale for each particular lot. Thus for one hundred acres offered for cash at ten shillings per acre, we shall lease at 12s. 6d. per acre, and will amount to £62 10s.; this sum will be the amount required from the lessee for the deed of freehold. The rent, however, will be as before, only 3% per annum. We sell at one price; we lease at another." The circular proceeds to say that "in the new or third form of lease the penalty clauses are struck out; so are all the clauses under Provincial Statute 4th Wm. IV. cap. 1, against overholding tenants, and the reser-

uations as respects gravel, coal, &c., are abandoned. All these clauses are unnecessary, and might give the Company's proceedings an aspect by no means desirable or contemplated." As if afraid of having conceded too much, a feature is introduced in the working of this clause more cruel and stringent than anything to be found even in the first lease, in dealing with defaulters. If in arrear forty days, the lease is held forfeited and open for lease to another; nay, the rent will not even be received after the forty days; but not to drive the lessee into actual despair, the Company condescends on his application, not to restore him, but to give him a new lease for the same lot, at the increased rent of four instead of three pounds, that is, adding  $33\frac{1}{3}$  per cent. to his rent. Now this is a refinement in extortion which leaves ordinary land-brokers far behind, and smells strongly of the penurious and usurious habits of the lowest trader, who thinks of nothing but how to add pound to pound. The circular then proceeds with self-gratulations on the success of the leasing system, which, as the writer says, proves its soundness and liberality in the most satisfactory and conclusive manner.

I have now gone through the different phases of your leasing system, which has been so little satisfactory to yourself, that



you have been continually changing and modifying its terms ; which I have pleasure in thinking indicates conscientious scruples on your part, for a more discreditable plan of disposing of your lands cannot be conceived. The leading object is to take advantage of the poor and needy, and to profit by their necessities ; bewildering them by complicated details which they cannot detect, and holding out to them apparent advantages which are totally fallacious. It is a system of vicious concealment which could never have been devised by a person of high principle and manliness of character. And it is the more wicked because it can reach only the poor and the ignorant. The intelligent settler with a little means sees through the deception, and if he purchase from the Company does so for cash, or by the five years instalments. Well might Lord Sydenham call the Company land-jobbers, for never was so rapacious a system of disposing of land carried out in America before. Were any private proprietor in the province rigidly to follow up your plans in selling his lands, he would be very soon held up to universal execration. You will perhaps say that you have a right to do with your lands as you please. And are there no duties attached to the possessions of property ? Is it necessary to have recourse to cunning and finesse to

overreach the poor and needy ? An emigrant, weary and discouraged after a long voyage, anxious to find a place of rest on any terms, and not understanding the real import or consequences of the conditions of the agreement he is signing, is easily induced to become your victim. You are very specious to him ; you affect a great regard for his interests, and he mistakes you for his friend, and to prove your friendship you first charge the helpless man as high a price for his land as you are willing to sell for money down, and then contriving by an indirect process to get from him twenty-five or thirty per cent. more than its real value ; but is this just and honourable dealing ?

I must confess that it has been long matter of great astonishment to me that the Press has been so long silent on these iniquitous proceedings. It was indeed to be expected that those journals which are favoured with your advertisements would say nothing on the subject, or that some of them would even praise your system ; but surely we might have looked for some honest and independent newspapers to have come forward and exposed these artifices, and given warning to the poor and needy and friendless emigrant not to permit himself to be deceived by fair promises. I can only account for this



misconduct of the Press from the belief that the Editors never examined the leasing system with any care, and from the confidence they reposed in the high character for just and honourable dealing which the Canada Company had acquired before you had any share in the management of their affairs. It was natural for the Editors to believe that the new system was an improvement of the same kind and liberal course which former Commissioners had pursued; and trusting to the praises bestowed on it by yourself and your dependent journals, they never thought of looking minutely into the subject. On the same grounds may we account for the apathy of the Legislature, whose duty it is to see that public Companies and Institutions are kept strictly to their duty. It is not perhaps competent for the Legislature to interpose in any other manner than to mark with its disapprobation such rapacious and disingenuous methods as you have adopted for the sale of your lands.

I trust that the brief illustration of this vicious management which I have thus given, will furnish more than sufficient reasons to the Bishop and Church Society for declining your offer, and refusing to intrust the sale of the Church property, designed for the support of their religion, to the direction of a Company which is

daily proving that it has no other object in view than making all it possibly can, by hook or by crook, out of the lands which it purchased so cheaply from an ill-advised Administration.

Your's, &c.

ALIIQUIS.

FREDERICK WIDDER, Esq.

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#### LETTER IV.

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HAMILTON, GORE, Feb. 1845.

SIR,—The very unhandsome and disingenuous manner in which you have interfered with the disposition of the property of the two national Churches, has led to this correspondence; and I trust it will be of essential service to you and to the Province; but there still remains one or two things to be disposed of before I finish.

Those who dwell in glass houses should be very careful, how they meddle with their neighbours' affairs,—an aphorism which seems to apply to you with singular effect; for in your letter to the Rev. Dr. Cook, you deliver an elaborate laudation on the Canada Company, and as it would appear, with the conviction that it must be responded to by every reader.

You say, "I trust that the period has arrived when the Province can appreciate



the great exertions of the Canada Company, who to promote the prosperity of the Colony spare neither labour nor expense on both sides of the Atlantic, in disseminating correct and useful information upon Canada, and which has so incalculably benefited the Colony, by attracting public notice to it and inducing settlement; but I shall only now mention among other facilities which the Company affords for emigration, that of the papers containing every kind of useful information upon Canada, 100,000 are annually distributed with maps of the Province. I need scarcely remark that these exertions are scarcely, if at all, participated in by any other party; and that neither the Crown, the Clergy, or King's College, have adopted any plan to further settlement of lands, although they, in common with other landed proprietors, participate (in a limited manner it is true) in the benefits that arise from the unassisted labours of the Canada Company in favour of the Province at large."

Now, to pass over the bad taste which cannot descant on the supposed merits of the Canada Company without a fling at the Crown and Clergy lands, and the management of King's College, and which deserves severe chastisement, I must confess that I am one of those who have not been able to discover that the Canada

Land Company has conferred any benefit whatever on this Province. They have no doubt been assiduous in advertising their lands, and urging them in all directions upon the attention of purchasers, and from exactly the same motives that the late Doctor Solomon advertised his Balm of Gilead, or Warren his inestimable blacking. The papers are daily full of advertisements by merchants and tradesmen, recommending their various wares, but who ever thinks that they are conferring benefits on the Province, and for which it ought to be grateful? They have no other end in view than to promote their own interest by disposing of their goods to the best advantage. They possess, however, much more modesty than the Company, because they make no claim to public gratitude. I do not blame the Company for doing their best in disposing of their lands at fair prices; but what is there meritorious in this? What disinterested benefits have they conferred upon Upper Canada? To what public works have they devoted a small portion of their immense profits? What Seminaries of learning have they fostered and endowed? What portions of land have they set apart in their prosperous townships for the secular and religious education of their inhabitants? Point out any public measure of



improvement which they have undertaken, unless for their own benefit, and I will thank you for the information!

When the Huron Tract was set apart as a distinct District, it might have been reasonably expected that the Company would have built the Jail and Court House, and thus prevented the necessity of taxing their poor settlers struggling in the wilderness to earn a scant subsistence. But no! they did no such thing. They were with much difficulty prevailed upon to advance the money to the District required for the necessary buildings, at six per cent., which they borrowed at four per cent.; so that instead of giving the district the benefit of their credit, they like good merchants made two per cent. on the transaction.

Let not, then, the Province, my kind Sir, be insulted any more with the benefits conferred upon it by the Canada Company: their exertions have never had any other end in view than their own exclusive interests; and if the Province has derived any indirect advantage from their settlements, it has done so proportionally from every new settlement, nay from every individual settler; a consequence or result which furnishes no claim for public gratitude.

But there is still time for the Canada Company to merit the gratitude of Upper

Canada, if so inclined. Let them establish schools in every one of their townships, and a large seminary for their own District of Huron. Let them give sites for school-houses and churches to their settlers of every denomination, and generous assistance to build them. Let the Harbour at Goderich be finished; its entrance made safe, and its basin within convenient; and then let them bestow it as a gift to the District or the Government.

Hitherto they have attended to their own interest only; but let them now take a fit of generosity, and they can well afford to do much more than I have mentioned; and till they do something of the kind, they can have no claim on the gratitude of the Province.

The whole of the land acquired by the Canada Company from the Government was 2,434,413 acres, but they paid only for 2,213,843, (the remainder being a gift) at about one shilling and ten pence per acre in ready money, or three and sixpence by deferred payments of equal instalments for sixteen years, without interest. These lands you now admit to be worth on an average 12s. 6d. per acre, and amounting on the whole to £1,552,751; from this deduct for management and payments to Government, and accruing interest at six per cent. on the same, £500,000, a sum



sufficiently ample, and even at the present low average price of 12s. 6d., will realize more than one million. But if we farther consider that the lands are rapidly rising in price, and that the Government has only now a small quantity at its disposal, so that emigrants must purchase from you, it is not too much to say that the portion still remaining to the Company will average thrice 12s. 6d.; for already, by your first lease, you charge £1 2s., and therefore, even with fair and open management, the Company may realize two or three millions, or much more than the public debt of Canada.

Think of this and taunt us no more with the benefits conferred by the Company on the Province; or, if you will speak point out one single disinterested act of any value to Upper Canada which they have as yet conferred.

The truth is that the Province receives no more from the Company than it is receiving in due proportion from any settler; not even so much, for the settlers continue to pay their taxes and to perform all the social duties of a citizen, whereas the Company do nothing of this sort, but separate themselves from the Province and its interests gradually as they dispose of their lands, and will in a few years leave it, with their magnificent gains, altogether. And indeed

unless their policy becomes more liberal, they will retire carrying their hundreds of thousands with them, without leaving a single memorial of public and permanent advantage behind them. The Province, therefore, owes no debt of gratitude to the Company, whatever you may assert, or your paid newspapers may say.

Before concluding, I have two pieces of advice to offer, and if you accept them not, you will have bitter cause of repentance when too late.

1. No longer deceive yourself as to the character of the Company. It never stood high in the Province, for its policy has ever been selfish, and since you have had a share in the management it has been rapidly sinking. The former Commissioners, whatever their inclinations may have been, had no power to do anything that might promote the general benefit of the Province; but as faithful servants and devoted to their duty, they gained a character for plain dealing and honesty of purpose; they acted fairly and equitably with the settlers; they admitted of no trickery in their transactions; all was open, fair, and above-ground; the poorest and most ignorant settler knew what he had to pay and how it was to be paid.

Under their guidance the Company excited little general notice, for it proceed-



ed quietly and successfully extending its settlements, and if the public thought of the Company at all it was rather with good-will than otherwise.

But your mode of dealing is awakening deep murmurs and bitter feelings of discontent, which will be followed by general indignation, unless some change in your present vicious management immediately takes place. Do not any longer say to your settlers that they pay no interest, where you are making them pay  $8\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. Do not say that your long credit is a boon, when you make them pay for it by doubling the price of their land, though this extension is of more benefit to the Company than to the settler.

If you are disposed to sell your lands on a credit of ten years, let it be without artifice or deceptive allurements; specify the price at once, and let it be paid by equal annual instalments, giving indulgence when unforeseen difficulty arises; and were you to give the first year free of interest you can well afford it; for rest assured that your present leasing system will never answer; that to raise a tenant's rent a third, or  $33\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., because he happens to be a defaulter forty days, will never succeed, but will beget universal odium, and that without advantage to the Company, because a condition so cruel and oppressive can never be enforced.

In fine, give up this leasing system, disgraced as it is by quackery and false pretences, if you desire the Company to prosper and be respected. They are gaining more than enough without subjecting their settlers to concealed difficulties and unexpected disappointments.

2. Abandon your fulsome coquetry with the Press of the Colony. You have been praising yourself, or getting others to praise you, till you verily begin to believe it all true. Do not any longer think that you are a most wonderful man, and that you have no equal in the Province. Excess of vanity and self-conceit is apt to eat up stronger minds than your's; and they constitute a happy delusion which I feel some compunction in removing. But it must be done; and you must be made aware that you stand much lower in other people's estimation than in your own; nor will the praises which present themselves in certain public prints, whether written by yourself or persons paid for the job, tend to raise you in the opinion of those whose respect is worth having. Such letters as those of A, and B, and C, and Editors of all shades of politics, (your favourite phrase) magnifying your great exertions and your provincial patriotism, have been the subject of general amusement; and it is certainly matter of wonder how you can be so very



silly as to continue a course which is covering you with ridicule. But no persons are so blind as your manœuverers; they are commonly men of some cunning, great presumption, and small ability, and are apt to believe that through the influence of advertisements, seasonable insinuations, and flattering attentions, they can bring about their objects, and if they should succeed once or twice, they become in their own eyes paragons of wisdom and giants in these degenerate days.

Besides a provincial reputation, you had, what has been more valuable, one to acquire in London; and these laudations on your schemes and exertions, which were carefully transmitted to St. Helen's, have been of great advantage to you, and have induced the Directors to think,—what indeed one of your venal prints has had lately the impudence to assert,—that till your arrival in Canada nothing in the Company's affairs was done right. But remember that artificial reputations never last, and the time is rapidly approaching when the Directors will be bitterly undeceived.

Had your dealings with the settlers been open, candid and straight-forward, there would have been no need for flattering notices in newspapers, or multiplied advertisements,—(by the way, it would be edifying to look at the amount of your adver-

tising account, including letters, notices, commentaries and so forth)—and you would have attained the same respect as the former Commissioners enjoy, for merit will be found out, if there be any; and if we have it not, newspapers will not confer it.

At this coquetting with the Press I was contented to laugh with others, till you touched on forbidden ground, and made every effort to thwart the Church in acquiring the management of her own property; and by your diligence in disseminating your letters, to raise a party against her; and what is still worse, to prejudice the Legislature and the public against her reasonable claim. To prevent these evils, as far as was in my power, I thought it my duty to address you on the great impropriety of such proceedings; but I have no personal feeling against you; and were you to confine yourself strictly to your proper avocations as Commissioner of the Canada Company, and to a plain and honest course of dealing, in the sale of your lands, you would soon stand much higher than you do now, although you would hear much less about it. But in this case you must give up all underhand working through the newspapers, and tampering with Members of the Legislature. Such manœuvring will neither do you nor the Company



any good. Dr. Dunlop's bill ought to teach you a lesson of prudence in this matter. The vast wealth which the Company is gradually carrying out of the country, and for which they leave no equivalent whatever, will make them anything but popular, and therefore you should be the more quiet and careful not to drag them unnecessarily before the public. You should also remember that the possession of property is accompanied with conditions of a generous character, not one of which the Company has as yet redeemed. They have done nothing worthy of the proprietors of so vast an estate to endear them to Upper Canada ; and be assured that unless they do something of the kind soon, instead of concentrating all their exertions to one object, that of screwing the last farthing from the poor emigrant, by rack prices and rack rents, they may expect very serious difficulties at no distant period.

Your's, &c.,

ALIQUIS.

FREDERICK WIDDER, Esq.

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